

RE: An Act Concerning the
Preservation of Natural
Vegetation Vital to State
Water Quality

Dear Members of the Environmental Committee,

The purpose of this letter and testimony is to endorse the proposed revision to section 22a-36 of the general statutes concerning the preservation of natural vegetation adjacent to our inland wetlands and watercourses. Inland wetlands and watercourses are critical elements of Connecticut's environment. They provide physical, chemical, biological and social functions. Some of these roles include the protection of water quality, floodwater storage and conveyance, water supply yield, groundwater recharge, and habitat for plants and animals.

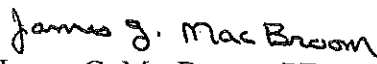
The quality of inland wetlands and watercourses is integrated with and dependent upon their surroundings. In many cases, their performance and continued existence is dependent upon sheltering them from excessive erosion and sedimentation from surrounding areas, sources of pollution, and excessive or concentrated surface runoff. In addition, tree roots help to stabilize river banks and floodplains, plus the adjacent shrubs and trees provide the organic detritus that form the foundation of the aquatic ecosystem.

This act will provide clear, concise and uniform criteria that will lead to fair and predictable results, minimizing conflicts between environmental protection and economic activity. In addition, this act preserves the natural vegetative cover on the FEMA designated floodway.

The National Climatological Data Center indicates that the mean annual precipitation in Connecticut is steadily increasing. U.S. Geological Survey stream flow gauging stations indicate that watercourses have rising discharge rates that will lead to broader channels and floodplains in the coming years. We must give them room to adjust.

I recommend that Connecticut approve this proposed act. Please feel free to contact me if you would like to discuss this further.

Respectfully Yours,


James G. MacBroom, PE
Adjunct Professor Yale University